

Trust founder takes tracksuits to India

The gift of warmth



Unpacking the t-shirts and tracksuits delivered by John Hunt

Children at the school wearing the tracksuits on Independence Day

By Karen Bate

POVERTY-stricken children from a Buddhist school in India have been given tracksuits from a Fordingbridge charity.

John Hunt, founder of the Lotus Flower Trust in Frogham, flew 8,000 miles to Ladakh, negotiating 170 miles over the highest navigable roads in the world, to deliver tracksuits to 250 children.

Headmistress of Nyoma Higher Secondary School Mrs Banu, the first to take up headship at the school for ten years, said: "Nobody has ever done anything like this for the students before. These students could be described as orphans as they only see their parents for 15 days a year.

"Just five per cent of children go into further education and the remainder become 'coolies' working for the government as road labourers. Those that can't get jobs become unemployed.

"A few young people work at high altitude looking after the yaks, sheep and pashmina goats."

The devastating floods that hit Ladakh forced John and his team to travel 170 miles from Leh, Ladakh and crossing the Tanglang La – the second highest navigable pass in the world – to reach Nyoma.

John said: "The spectacular, if not a little hairy journey, which took in mountains, wolves and nomads, was well worthwhile, especially when you could see the delight on the children's faces, children who have never received a present before in their lives."

The temperatures reach 40C below zero in winter, so the tracksuits have insulated lining, made by a friend of the trust Mr Jat, who provides clothing for children at the Janet Sheed Roberts Home for Special Needs Children in Ramnagar – another project funded by the trust.

The poverty-stricken areas of India, which have little or no education provision for children, have affected

John deeply. In the past six years, the trust has raised funds to build more than 30 schools and homes for children in India.

John, now 73 and showing no signs of stopping, believes that if the trust can help just a few children improve and change their lives then he, and everyone who supports the charity, has achieved something remarkable.

The tracksuits, which boast the Lotus Flower logo, were funded by Duty Free News and Martin Sergeant.

John is organising a fashion show with Travelling Trends, at Hyde Memorial Hall on Friday, November 27 at 6.45pm.

Proceeds will go towards a home for destitute children at Number 2 Gate Railway Slum, Guwahati, Assam in India.

Tickets are on sale at the Hyde-out Café, Hyde or from Lotus Flower Trust.

Call 01425 650493 for details.

For information about the trust go to lotusflowertrust.org.

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